



# Guide to Selected U.S. Travel and Identity Documents

Prepared by the Forensic Document Laboratory



U.S. Immigration  
and Customs  
Enforcement

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This guide is intended to assist those tasked with examining travel and employment authorization documents. It contains color photographs of the most commonly used documents, but it is not comprehensive. There are earlier valid revisions of some illustrated documents and other less common documents that are not illustrated here.

Because the attachments are reproductions, the exact size and color may deviate from the original. Do not make identifications based on size and/or color alone.

For any questions regarding the authenticity of the documents shown in this guide, please contact the nearest office of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

## General Information On Alien Status

In accordance with the 14th amendment to the U.S. Constitution, any person born in and subject to the jurisdiction of the United States is a citizen of the United States at birth. U.S. citizenship may also be acquired through **DERIVATION** from a U.S. citizen parent when children are born abroad or through **NATURALIZATION** after meeting the necessary residency requirements. All persons not citizens or nationals of the U.S. are aliens, who are generally classified as **PERMANENT RESIDENTS** (immigrants), **NON-IMMIGRANTS** or **UNDOCUMENTED ALIENS**.

**PERMANENT RESIDENT ALIENS** enjoy almost all the same rights as U.S. citizens. This status may be obtained through a number of different procedures and, unless taken away administratively, is granted for life. Aliens with permanent residency must carry evidence of their status.

**NON-IMMIGRANT ALIENS** are admitted to the U.S. for a temporary period of time and for a specific purpose, most often as tourists. There are different categories of non-immigrants and they are identified through letter/number symbols (such as “B-2”). Non-immigrants are also required to present evidence of their lawful status in the U.S. to officers of ICE. This will usually consist of a passport containing a visa and an Arrival/Departure Record (Form I-94 or CBP I-94A).

**UNDOCUMENTED ALIENS** are those who may have crossed the border illegally and/or been smuggled into the interior of the U.S. or those who have violated their non-immigrant status by accepting unauthorized employment, remaining longer than permitted or committing some other violation. Some of these aliens purchase counterfeit documents or assume another person’s identity by using fraudulently obtained genuine documents.

Several different versions of the U.S. passport are currently valid and in circulation at this time. The most recent version, called the E-Passport, contains an electronic chip in the back cover. These passports can be identified by the chip logo on the front cover.







The current version of the **CERTIFICATE OF NATURALIZATION**, now issued by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), is similar to the previous version issued by the Immigration and Naturalization Service. It contains a gold embossed Great Seal of the United States in the top center portion. The watermark design, visible when the document is held up to a strong light, contains the emblem of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).



DHS watermark

Older versions of the certificate of naturalization continue to serve as valid evidence of U.S. citizenship. The last version issued by the INS was similar to the current DHS certificate. It too bore a gold embossed Great Seal of the United States in the top center portion. The watermark design contained the the Department of Justice seal and the letters “USA.”

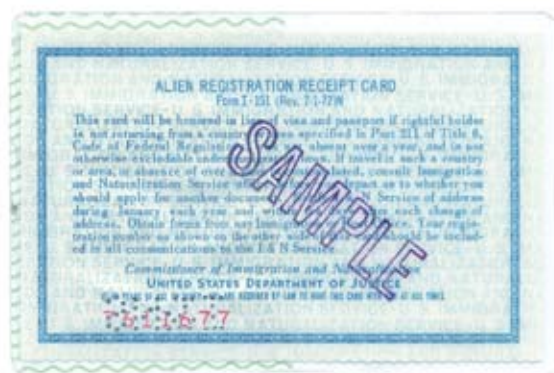


Department of Justice watermark

Earlier versions of the certificate had gray or beige background designs and did not contain the embossed seal. Original certificates of naturalization were printed on watermarked paper.



The first **ALIEN REGISTRATION RECEIPT CARD**, Form I-151, was introduced in 1946. Through 18 years of various revisions, it remained primarily green in color, causing it to become known as a “Green Card.” This term is still used commonly, although the cards have not been green since 1959. The I-151 cards contained no expiration date and were only required to be renewed if the recipient was under the age of 14 at the time of issuance or if the card was lost or stolen. As of March 20, 1996, the Form I-151 is no longer acceptable as evidence of permanent residence.



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The **RESIDENT ALIEN CARD**, Form I-551, was introduced in January 1977 and phased in over a period of time. In addition to the photograph, the I-551 contains the bearer's signature and fingerprint. As with the older I-151 cards, this version I-551 generally does not contain an expiration date.



Form I-551 (1977)

The **RESIDENT ALIEN CARD**, Form I-551, was revised in August 1989. This version was the first Alien Registration Card to contain an expiration date on every card. These cards were usually valid for ten years from the date of issue. The expiration date indicates when the card expires and must be renewed. It does **NOT** indicate that the alien's status has expired. The card was modified in January 1992 when a white box was added behind the fingerprint.



Form I-551 (1989)



Form I-551 (1992)



Reverse

**PERMANENT RESIDENT CARD**

NAME CRITTENDEN, LEE W.

INS A# 022-345-679

Birthdate 10/04/49 Category P26 Sex M

Country of Birth Canada

CARD EXPIRES 11/01/94

Resident Since 11/01/97

C1USA0223456791EAC9730053465<<  
4910040M9411014CAN<<<<<<<<<<<<9  
CRITTENDEN<<LEE<W<<<<<<<<<<<<<<

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE Immigration and Naturalization Service

**PERMANENT RESIDENT CARD**

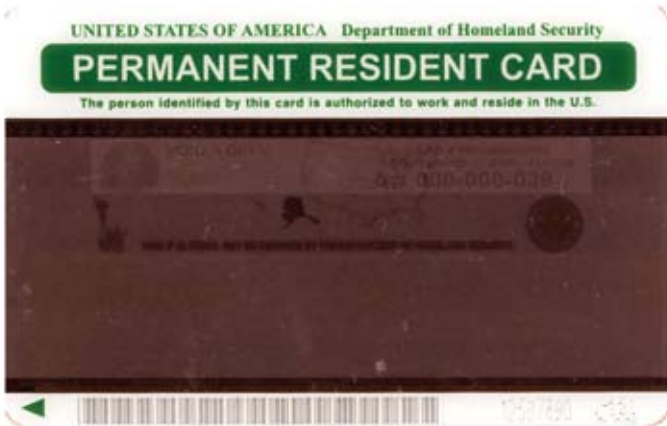
The person identified by this card is authorized to work and reside in the U.S.

VOID IF ALTERED MAY BE REVOKED BY INS.

SP 4985 1-551 (Rev. 8-7-88)

The optical memory stripe on the reverse contains encoded cardholder information as well as a personalized etching which depicts the bearer's photo, name, signature, date of birth, alien registration number, card expiration date and card number.

The optical memory stripe on the reverse retains the same features as the previous card version. The stripe contains encoded cardholder information on the card bearer. Each card is personalized with an etching showing the bearer's photo, name, signature, date of birth, alien registration number, card expiration date and card number.



Reverse



This **EMPLOYMENT AUTHORIZATION DOCUMENT**, Form I-688B, was introduced in November 1989 and issued to aliens who were granted permission to be employed in the U.S. for a specific period of time. The card was produced with a Polaroid process and had interlocking gold lines across the front.



Form I-688B

In January 1997, INS began issuing a new **EMPLOYMENT AUTHORIZATION CARD**, Form I-766. The front of the card bore the photograph, fingerprint and signature of the bearer. The reverse contained a standard bar code, magnetic strip and a two-dimensional bar code which contains unique card, biographic and biometric data.



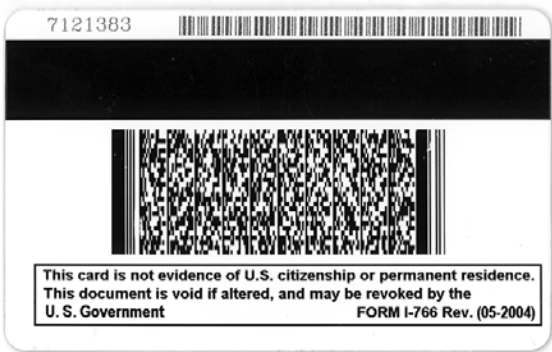
Form I-766 (1997)



The **EMPLOYMENT AUTHORIZATION CARD**, Form I-766 was updated in May 2004. It incorporated the DHS seal but is otherwise similar to the previous version, with a photograph, fingerprint and signature of the bearer beneath a holograph film. The reverse side displays a standard bar code, magnetic strip and a two-dimensional bar code containing encoded data. The card was revised again in August 2004, using a full frontal face photograph instead of the three quarter face position. The reverse continues to bear the revision date of 05-2004.



Form I-766 (2004)




Reverse

Form I-327 (prior to February 2007)Form I-571 (prior to February 2007)

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA Department of Homeland Security		U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services	
<b>Permit to Re-Enter</b> <b>Form I-327 (Rev. 02/19/07)</b>	<b>Type/Category</b> <b>TR</b>	<b>Country/Pays</b> <b>GERMA</b>	<b>Folio Number/ Numero du Dossier</b> <b>A99999991</b>
	<b>Entrées/Entrées</b> <b>M</b>	<b>Book No/P de Livret</b> <b>000000134</b>	
	<b>Transmises/Trans</b> <b>SPECIMEN</b>	<b>Mode Name/Mode Prénoms</b> <b>VOID</b>	
	<b>Civil Name/Prénoms</b> <b>TEST</b>	<b>Gender/Genre</b> <b>M</b>	
	<b>Date of Birth/Date de Naissance</b> <b>01 APR/AVR 2006</b>	<b>Date of Expiration/Date d'Expiration</b> <b>17 JAN/JAN 2007</b>	
<b>Date of Issue/Date de Délivrance</b> <b>17 JAN/JAN 2006</b>	<b>Restrictions/Restrictions</b> <b>NONE --- SAMPLE BOOKLET</b>		
<b>Permis de Réentrée</b>			

**TRAVEL DOCUMENT**



Issued by  
U.S. Citizenship  
and Immigration Services



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The U.S. Department of State introduced this version of the **BORDER CROSSING CARD**, Form DSP-150, in May 1998. The front of the card has a three-line machine readable zone and a hologram. Bearers of this card are not entitled to live or work in the United States.



Form DSP-150 (1998)



Reverse

The optical memory stripe contains encoded cardholder information as well as a personalized etching which depicts the bearer's photo, name, date of birth and card expiration date.

When an alien has been granted admission into the U.S. by a U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Officer at an authorized Port of Entry, he/she will be issued an **ARRIVAL/DEPARTURE RECORD**, Form I-94, the bottom portion of which is stapled to a page in the alien's passport. This document shows how long the bearer may remain in the U.S. and the terms of admission. The I-94, not the non-immigrant visa, serves as evidence of legal status.

Departure Number: 626633123 12

OMB No. 1651-0111

I-94  
Departure Record

ADMITTED ATL  
JUN 25 2006  
Class: L-1  
April 23, 2009

14. Family Name: SAMPLE

15. First (Given) Name: JANE

16. Birth Date (Day/Mo/Yr): 23, 03, 68

17. Country of Citizenship: NEW ZEALAND

See Other Side

CBP Form I-94 (10/04)  
STAPLE HERE

Form I-94

Nationals of some countries can enter the United States without a visa under the Visa Waiver Program. They are given a green I-94W and permitted to remain in the United States up to 90 days.

Departure Number: 695349308 12

OMB No. 1651-0113

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY  
U.S. Customs and Border Protection  
VISA WAIVER

ADMITTED ATL  
JUN 25 2006  
Class: WT  
Sept. 24, 2006

14. Family Name: SAMPLE

15. First (Given) Name: JOHN

16. Birth Date (day/mo/yr): 19, 07, 72

17. Country of Citizenship: UNITED KINGDOM

See Other Side

CBP Form I-94W (10/04)  
Staple Here

Form I-94W



USCIS can extend a period of admission or change a non-immigrant status after an I-94 has been issued. The approval for an extension or change of status is shown on an I-797A Approval Notice.

Department of Homeland Security  
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

I-797A, Notice of Action

**THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**  
DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY  
U.S. CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION SERVICES

<b>NOTICE NUMBER</b> LIN-06-120-00000		<b>SECTION 1221</b> APPLICATION TO EXTEND/CHANGE NONIMMIGRANT STATUS	
<b>DATE</b> May 12, 2006	<b>RECEIPT</b> 051-120-120-00000	<b>STATUS</b> R2	<b>CLASS</b> R2
<b>NAME</b> K... ..		<b>DATE OF BIRTH</b> 11/19/1966	
<b>ADDRESS</b> CHICAGO IL 60606		<b>Notice Type: Approval Notice</b> Class: R2 Valid from 05/20/2006 to 11/19/2006	

The above application for extension of temporary stay is approved. The temporary stay of the listed applicant is authorized to the date indicated above. An updated Entry Form is required.

If the applicant has an authorized representation, this notice has been issued to the representative.

Please read the back of this form carefully for more information.

This form is not a visa and may be used to extend to 6 months.

Please see the additional information on the back. You will be notified separately about any other issues you filed.

IMMIGRATION SERVICE CENTER  
U. S. DEPT. OF HOMELAND SECURITY  
1300 L Street, N.E.  
Washington, D.C. 20003-1212  
Customer Service Telephone: 800-375-5283  
Form I-797A (Rev. 08/07/05)

**Detach This Half for Personal Records**

Receipt # LIN-06-120-00000  
I-94# 051-120-120-00000  
NAME K... ..  
CLASS R2  
VALID FROM 05/20/2006 UNTIL 11/19/2006  
PETITIONER: K... ..  
CHICAGO IL 60606

**051-120-120-00000 12**  
Receipt Number LIN-06-120-00000  
Immigration and  
Naturalization Service  
I-94  
Departure Record      Petitioner:

14. Family Name K... ..	15. First Name K... ..
16. Country of Origin POLAND	17. Date of Birth 11/19/1966

Form I-797A (Rev. 10/31/05) N

Form I-797A

The lower portion of the form replaces the original I-94, but it does not require any endorsing stamp.

PLEASE TEAR OFF FORM I-94 PRINTED BELOW, AND STAPLE TO ORIGINAL I-94 IF AVAILABLE

**Detach This Half for Personal Records**

Receipt # LIN-06-120-00000  
I-94# 051-120-120-00000  
NAME K... ..  
CLASS R2  
VALID FROM 05/20/2006 UNTIL 11/19/2006  
PETITIONER: K... ..  
CHICAGO IL 60606

**051-120-120-00000 12**  
Receipt Number LIN-06-120-00000  
Immigration and  
Naturalization Service  
I-94  
Departure Record      Petitioner:

14. Family Name K... ..	15. First Name K... ..	16. Date of Birth 11/19/1966
17. Country of Origin POLAND		18. Date of Birth 11/19/1966

Form I-797A (Rev. 10/31/05) N



Some immigrants may have an impression of an ADIT stamp as proof of permanent residence without an immigrant visa. This stamp serves as evidence of immigrant status until the bearer receives a Permanent Resident Card.



The current USCIS stamp is shown above. ADIT stamps in other formats may also be encountered. Similar stamp impressions are used to demonstrate refugee or asylum status.

Although **SOCIAL SECURITY CARDS** are not immigration documents, they are mentioned here because they are often used as identification and to establish employment authorization.

Social Security cards have been issued since 1936 and have been revised more than 20 times. Originally, the Social Security card contained the seal of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. In May 1980, the seal changed to that of the Department of Health and Human Services. In April 1995 the seal was changed again to that of the Social Security Administration. Some counterfeiters have failed to notice these changes.

In October 1983, security features were added to the card. All Social Security cards issued since October 1983 have been printed with raised (intaglio) printing and the signature line consists of microline printing of the words “**SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION**” in a repeating pattern.



This card belongs to the Social Security Administration and you must return it if you ask for it.

If you find a card that isn't yours, please return it to:  
Social Security Administration  
P.O. Box 33008, Baltimore, MD 21290-3008

For any other Social Security business/information, contact your local Social Security office. If you write to the above address for any business other than returning a found card you will not receive a response.

Social Security Administration  
Form SSA-3000 (11-2006)

**F15532006**

To order copies of this document,  
“Form M-396; Guide to Selected U.S. Travel and Identity Documents,”  
please complete the appropriate form and mail or fax to:

**Customs and Border Protection  
National Distribution Center**

P.O. Box 68912  
Indianapolis, IN 46268

**Fax: 317-290-3046**

For government requests, please use **Form CBP-3039**.

All other requests should use **Form CBP-262**.

Links for these forms may be found in the  
Forensic Document Laboratory fact sheet  
posted on ICE’s Web site:

**[www.ice.gov](http://www.ice.gov)**



U.S. Immigration  
and Customs  
Enforcement

Form M-396  
4/2008